



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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**ANITA M. BOCK**  
Director

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:**  
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December 27, 2001

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From:  Anita M. Bock, Director

### **DECEMBER 11, 2001 BOARD MOTION: MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAMS**

This is in response to your Board's motion on December 11, 2001 regarding the Department of Children and Family Services, Bureau of Child Protection's implementation of the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team Program.

This memo and the attached flow charts will document to the Board how both the Bureau of Child Protection and the Bureau of Children and Family Services have considered and incorporated the Department's existing programs in the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team Concept, enabling us to provide a continuum of services for children and families of Los Angeles County.

The Bureau of Child Protection's staff have met with the administrators of Team Decision-making, Family Group Decision-making, Family Preservation, Systems of Care, and other program initiatives within the Department. Additionally, the Bureau's administrators and other support staff have met with the regional staff of the Bureau of Child Protection and the Bureau of Children and Family Services to elicit their input and cooperation. These multiple collaborations have resulted in the inclusion of the existing DCFS programs into the Multidisciplinary Assessment Team Concept.

Team Decision-making and Family Group Decision-making are initiatives of the Family to Family Model designed to encourage Family and Community involvement in the child welfare system and decisions made regarding their children.

Team Decision-making, which is only one of the components of the Family to Family program, may occur at several points during a family's involvement in the Department of Children and Family Services. Team Decision-making seeks Family and Community involvement to resolve issues, which may cause the child/children to be removed from the home and community. Community involvement and resources are the essential elements.

Family Group Decision-making although not an initial component of the Family to Family model will be adapted and available to a family on an ongoing basis whether the child is in placement or at home. Family Group Decision-making will be used as a resource when an intensive family and community intervention is needed to resolve conflicts of visitation, placement, stability, compliance with court orders, behavior problems and permanency planning.

Diagram A, the "Point of Engagement Draft", illustrates the collaboration between both the Bureau of Child Protection and the Bureau of Children and Family Services to provide both expedient and optimal services to children and families. The "point of engagement" refers to the transfer of service responsibility from the Emergency Response Investigator to the services' social worker that will provide ongoing services to the children and families. This will be field tested in the Wateridge office and then phased into all areas of the Department.

At the conclusion of the investigative process, the Emergency Response Investigator will assess safety and risk to the child/children and determine whether the child/children will need to be removed from their home. They will also determine what level of services the family may need. The Family to Family initiatives of Team Decision-making and Family Group Decision-making may be utilized at this point in the continuum to include the family and the community in the decision.

If the situation does not present immediate risk, but services are needed, children will be allowed to remain safely in their home, with DCFS providing the appropriate referrals. For no risk/low risk cases, or cases that have been evaluated as inconclusive, referrals might include parenting, housing, or linkage to DCFS community based agencies such as AB 1733 agencies, at which time DCFS would close the case. For higher risk cases, DCFS would remain involved and provide voluntary services. Family Preservation will also be considered, and implemented to ensure a high level of service to the family. In the event that placement is needed to ensure the safety of the child/children they will be placed in their own communities in coordination with the Family to Family Initiative.

If the situation does present immediate risk, the children will be removed from the family home, and depending on the circumstances, the Family to Family initiatives of Team Decision-making/Family to Family Conferencing may be employed to help in service and placement decisions. If these procedures are unsuccessful, the child will proceed to stage one, the screening process, of the multidisciplinary assessment.

Protocols are currently being developed to ensure that these programs are an integral part of the referral process. Following the initial screening, coordination efforts will be made to proceed to stage two of the multidisciplinary assessment where the children will receive a comprehensive assessment designed to evaluate all areas of functioning. It is anticipated that the process will last anywhere between 30-45 days. Following this assessment, the team will be in a better position to recommend services and treatment referrals that may include but are not limited to referrals to outpatient counseling, Systems of Care, Wraparound Services, Regional Center, California Children's Services or probation.

In conclusion, every consideration has been given to incorporate the many existing initiatives within the Department in the development of a Multidisciplinary Assessment Team approach model. The variety of programs within the Department helps to serve the individualized service needs of our clients, and allow for a broad spectrum of service options.

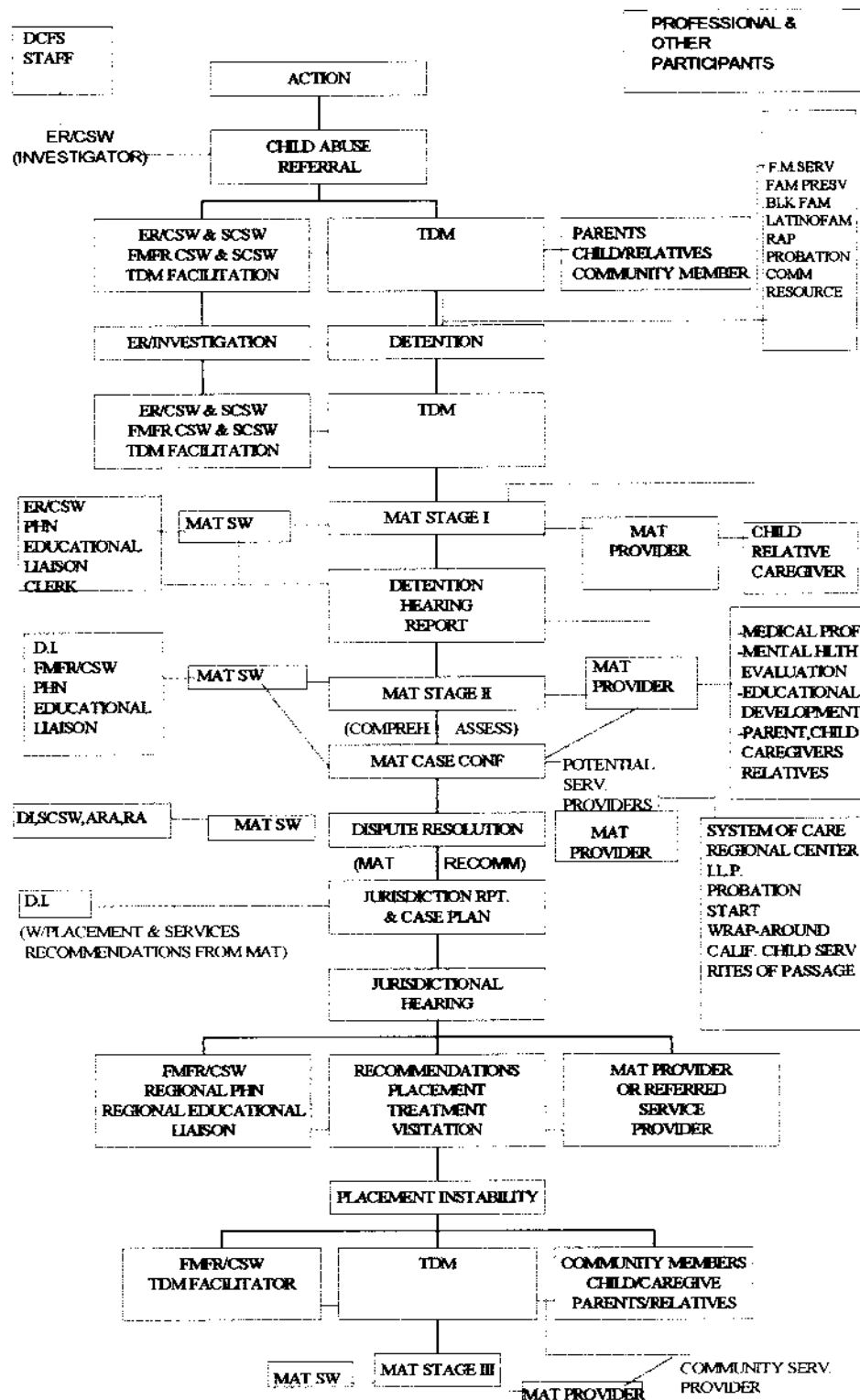
Should you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me or your staff may contact Helen Berberian at (213) 351-5530.

AMB:EM:MG:td

#### Attachments

c: Chief Administrative Officer  
County Counsel  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

# MULTIDISCIPLINARY ASSESSMENT TEAM





Evaluation

Therapy



Structured Dec. Making



Point of Engagement: Non-Decision

Res. Respond Imm./2 Bus. Days

Vol. Fam. Man (Low)

Initial Case Plan Services

CSW

1733/2894

CFPN

Systems of Care  
Family Support Serv.  
Other Services

VFM/VP (Med/H)

Fam. Pres

Case Plan/ Services

MCPG

Team Decision Making

VFM/VP (H)

Fam. Pres

Case Plan/ Services

MCPG

Point of Engagement: Decision

Respond Imm./1 Bus. Day

Services Provided

Case Plan



Failed VFM/VP

New Allg.



Non Coop.

Detention Report



Team Dec Making



F2F/Com. Based Placmnt



VP



VP



VP

# Point Of Engagement Flow Chart

DRAFT

December 20, 2001

High Risk Elements: Age 0--59 months, Prior History, Services w/ DCFS, Substance Abuse, Excessive Corporal Punishment

